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asked to utter and write spells to hasten the womb. After the infant is born the cord is cut with a pair of scissors and the placenta is buried in the ground in the house or outside.

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After childbirth a Miao woman drinks several bowls of cold water for the purpose of purifying her blood. Within three days she goes out to the fields to work. There are cases in which a woman gives birth in the forenoon and goes out to work in the afternoon. It is said that the Miao woman is able to do this by

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eating a secret herb. For postnatal nourishment the poor eat eggs and the rich eat chicken.

Recently, the Miao have adopted the Chinese custom of inviting friends and relatives to a feast and naming ceremony on the third day after a child's birth. A name is sometimes adopted according to the time of birth. For instance, if a child is born in a certain month, it would be named after the month.

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The chief of the Miao at the time of the rebellion during the reign of Emperor Ch'ien Lung was called Wu pa-yieh /Wu, Eighth Month/. Sometimes the name of the season when the birth occurred is adopted. In another case, the weight of the infant may be used as the name, for instance, an infant weighing so many chin at birth will be named for that weight. In still other cases, the name of an animal, a pig, goat, sheep, dog, or cow is used in the belief that the child will be easy to raise.

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There is no definite time for feeding the baby. Generally when the baby cries it is fed. If the mother has no milk, the baby is then fed with sugar and rice. At the time of teething,

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if the first tooth emerges in the upper jaw, it is a sign of ill omen, portending the death of one of the parents or paternal grandparents, because the Miao believe that such a tooth is a grave-digging hoe.

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/100/ A pregnant unmarried girl often produces an abortion by swallowing mercury. Illegitimate infants are often drowned.

Properly married couples rarely practice abortion or infanticide.

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2. Letting-Out-the-Ku Magic

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/199/ Ku poisoning is very ancient. Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan /Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals/, first year of Chao: "To put insects in a vessel to get a ku, in order to cause illness." It can be seen that more than 2,000 years ago the business of ku poisoning already was in existence. Cheng Ch'iao of the Sung dynasty in the section "Liu Shu Liao" of his T'ung-chih records the method of making ku, saying: "A hundred insects are put in a vessel and allowed to devour each other. The one left is the ku." It has always been against the law to practice this. The old Criminal Code had an article relating to "the manufacture of ku poison." But it is still secretly practiced today among the Miao. Volume 7 of Kan-chou t'ing-chih states: "Miao women can kill people by ku witchcraft. It is called "letting out the grass kuei." They let them out when they are at odds with someone. If they are let go on the outside of the body, they eat up the five constituents of the human frame /muscles, veins, flesh, bones, skin and hair/. When they are let out inside the body, they consume the five inward parts, or organs. The victim suffers either agonizing pain, or becomes listless, or his skin will swell, or he will feel suffocated, all means of bringing him to death. A month before his death the victim sees the soul of the person who set the ku on him coming from behind to give him something, which is called "the hastening medicine." If the sick person cannot be cured within a month he dies. It is said that either a man or a woman can learn this. It is necessary to set up an altar secretly, and to raise a few tiny shrimps in a small earthen jar filled with water. It should be buried in the earth beneath a bed in a dark room, or under a rock in an isolated path in a remote mountain. If this earthen jar is found by someone and burned, then the practitioner of this ku witchcraft will also die. When sending forth the ku one may use one, two, ~~three~~, or four fingers. The poison from one or two fingers is relatively easy to overcome;

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574 If the meal is not eaten in the "intimate circle," that is, if there are several guests or even strangers at the table, the men eat together first, and then the women, girls, boys, and children eat what is left over from the feast. The same rule applies for meals on festive days.

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826 The industriousness of the Meau is indicated by the fact
[461] that they do not regard long fingernails as a sign of beauty or as a symbol of good luck and health, but rather as poor grooming and a sign of laziness. This attitude has nothing to do with cleanliness and hygiene, which leave much to be desired (see the chapter, "Medicine").

576 Greeting formulas that are associated with the time of day or mode of action, such as "Good day" or "Till we meet again," are unknown. Whenever two Meau meet, the older one first asks the younger one: "Where are you going?" or "where do you come from?" This greeting formula is therefore independent of the time of the day. As a gesture of greeting, the Meau squat on the ground or, standing, bend the upper part of the body far forward and hold both hands flat in front of them, with the palms upward as though they were to receive two handfuls of rice. At the same time the hands are moved up and down. The person of higher position makes this gesture of
[576] greeting to the person of lower position first, thus, the older to the younger, the man to the woman, the host, as a matter of courtesy, to the guest.
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574 In the latter case, the invitation to enter the house is
576 given at the same time. The guest replies with the same polite gestures and slowly steps closer. This behavior is the opposite of our European customs, but among the Meau the meaning lies in the fact that the higher person first takes cognizance, so to speak, of the presence of the other by his greeting. The Meau simply ignores an enemy and does not greet him because he regards it as beneath his dignity to converse with him. This "taking cognizance of the other" is done among the Meau with appropriate politeness. When a guest takes his leave, he announces it several times, but only after some time will he actually decide to depart.